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guiding the horses of the sun, are the painter's own design. Across the window embrasure runs an inscription, that gives the keynote to all Alma-Tadema's life: "As the sun colors flowers, so art colors life." Neither are the walls mere slavish imitations of ancient models. As in his pictures, so here, Alma-Tadema allows his fancy free play. Whoever looks at them closely will find that though on a careless glance he will carry away the impression that all the panels are painted with classical designs, closer inspection will reveal that this is by no means the case. Many of them are genial *jeux d'esprit*, for Alma-Tadema is no "grave and reverent seignior," but a man who dearly loves a joke. Here then we see a panel on which are depicted the tools of plasterers, bricklayers, and carpenters, a trowel, a saw, and an old oil bottle. Another bears on it dirty old paint pots and brushes, the utensils of the house-painter's craft, and a wooden board stretches across with the caution "Wet Paint." Yet another shows a long bill, happily receipted with a real receipt stamp, and bags of money lying round.

A writing or designing desk, altar-shaped, and decorated with bas-reliefs after Greek, Byzantine, and modern masters, occupies one corner of the room. Low stools and quaint seats, exactly copied from Egyptian models, are dotted about the room. The artist himself prefers for painting a wicker stool that is usually covered with silken stuffs or skins. Tiger skins are thrown across low wicker arm-chairs or lie upon the parquetry floor into which is let a mosaic of colored woods, repeating the initials L. A. T. On a projecting shelf that runs all round the wall, stand fragments of sculpture, canvases begun and abandoned, and articles of vertu. The fireplace is flanked by pilasters, between which hangs a curtain of dark golden stuff, throwing out into rich relief the bronze bust of Mrs. Alma-Tadema, who fittingly presides above the hearthstone. There are usually two or three easels standing in the room, often bearing pictures on both back and front. Those upon which Alma-Tadema is not actually at work are sometimes veiled from sight by a rich piece of drapery. A curtain hung over one corner of the room hides those that are for a time totally withdrawn. Beside the fireplace, a doorway, habitually closed by a Japanese matting, forms a second exit from this studio, whence we descend again by three brass steps into the panel-

room, having thus made the tour of the whole floor. When the artist desires not to be disturbed, he can close himself in by drawing down a door on which he has painted a Bacchus sailing the seas, a copy from a design in the centre of a Greek dish. Indeed Townshend House is full of such unexpected doors and openings, due to the fecund and happy imaginings of its master. To see it properly one must have visited it often, have stayed in it, have seen it in all lights and times. It is not a house to be comprehended in one short visit, and it may be added that the oftener one sees it, and the more one comes to understand how all these lovely effects have been brought about, the

THE COLOR OF WALLS AND WOODWORK.

WALLS to a room (says a writer in *The Paper World*) should be regarded only in the light of a framework for what the room contains, and should be decorated so as to bring into prominence, and not eclipse, the other parts of the chamber. Nothing destroys the effect of a room so much as a handsome but staring wall-paper, or a wall so profusely ornamented as to strike upon the eye to the exclusion of the rest of the decorations, thus bringing forward what should be the background into the most conspicuous place. A modern drawing-room is always

difficult to decorate artistically, because of the taste of its builders for heavy cornices, prominent mantel-pieces, and rooms too lofty for their size; and as all these misnamed "embellishments" are too costly to be removed by tenants, the only plan to pursue is to destroy their effect by exercising both taste and ingenuity.

First, with regard to the ceiling, the ornamental plaster boss in its centre should be removed and the ceiling tinted a color that harmonizes with the wall-paper, as no harmonies can be hoped for when what produces them is surmounted with the glaring white of an ordinary ceiling. The tint used must be one that softens into the wall-paper, not one that contrasts; thus, if the tone of the room is a soft gray-blue, the ceiling should be a clear flesh-pink; or should a gray-green picked out with black be the chosen color, then it should be colored a subdued lemon.

Some people cover their ceilings with a whole colored paper and border it with a stencilled pattern representing the thin garlands so familiar upon Queen

Anne decorations; but this is a more troublesome plan than the simple coloring, which answers all the purpose. The walls, if they are lofty, require a high dado. These high dados give a look of comfort and "home" that is absent from the modern, high-pitched room papered with one uniform pattern. The dado is divided three feet to four feet from the ceiling, and the coloring of the lower portion must always be heavier than that used on the upper, or a "top-heavy" look will be given to the room. When many pictures are to be hung up, the lower part of the dado should be of a whole color, either a whole colored paper, or a painted wall, as pictures are only shown off upon such a background. Where a whole tint is used for



THE DRAWING-ROOM IN ALMA-TADEMA'S HOUSE.

more one admires it. And as with one visit, so with one short article. It is not possible within our limits to give even an adequate notion of its beauty.

H. ZIMMERN.

THE relation between the forms and colors he adopts is always in the mind of the artist. If there be not much difference between the shades of color used, he sees that his forms shall be strong enough to take care of themselves; unless, indeed, it be his deliberate intention that the pattern shall just break the monotony of a flat surface, without itself being obvious. There are patterns that are meant to be felt by their influence rather than seen.

the lower part of the dado, the upper portion should be decorated with a frieze paper of a good, bold pattern, but of subdued coloring and of tint that harmonizes with the lower. Thus, the color used about the frieze should be the same as that on the lower part, but of a lighter shade, intermixed with some other colors that form a harmonious link between the two shades. Contrasts must be carefully avoided, but pale pinks, blues, and ambers can be blended together above a subdued gray-blue ground. The two portions of the dado should be joined together with a light wooden (black or brown) railing, or with a line of paint.

The dado decoration can be altered by placing the pattern paper upon the lower part and leaving the upper part plain colored, with or without a stencilled pattern upon it. This will suit a room where not many pictures are required, or that is already rather dark. Some part of the wall should always be in plain color, as the eye requires rest; and no pattern, however subdued in hue, can give the relief to the mind that a bit of plain coloring affords; and this scarcity of ornament in one part of the room is amply repaid by the effect it gives to such parts as are bright and should be bright. The true theory of effect is to use but one or two bright colors in a room, and to surround them by soft and subdued tints that throw up and do not destroy their brilliancy; a number of bright colors placed together destroy each other, and leave an impression on the mind of glare and vulgarity. Having settled upon your paper and ceiling, have the woodwork and cornice of the room painted either a shade lighter or darker than the walls, and shroud up the mantelpiece with curtains, of satin sheeting embroidered with crewels, and instead of the usual looking-glass over the fireplace, have a mirror surrounded with brackets holding china, or have a black wooden mantelpiece made with squares of looking-glass set in. The background of your room being thus completed in such a manner as really to be a background, your furniture will look twice as well as if it were stared out of countenance by the walls; and one need hardly add that all your friends will delight in a room that throws up and brings out their dresses and faces, instead of killing them by its glaring tints.

REFORM IN FRENCH DECORATION.

A REACTION is setting in at Paris against overcrowding and overdressing in interior decoration. For some time past the abuse of plush, silk, screens and objects of art and curiosity in the furnishing of Parisian apartments has been growing beyond all rea-

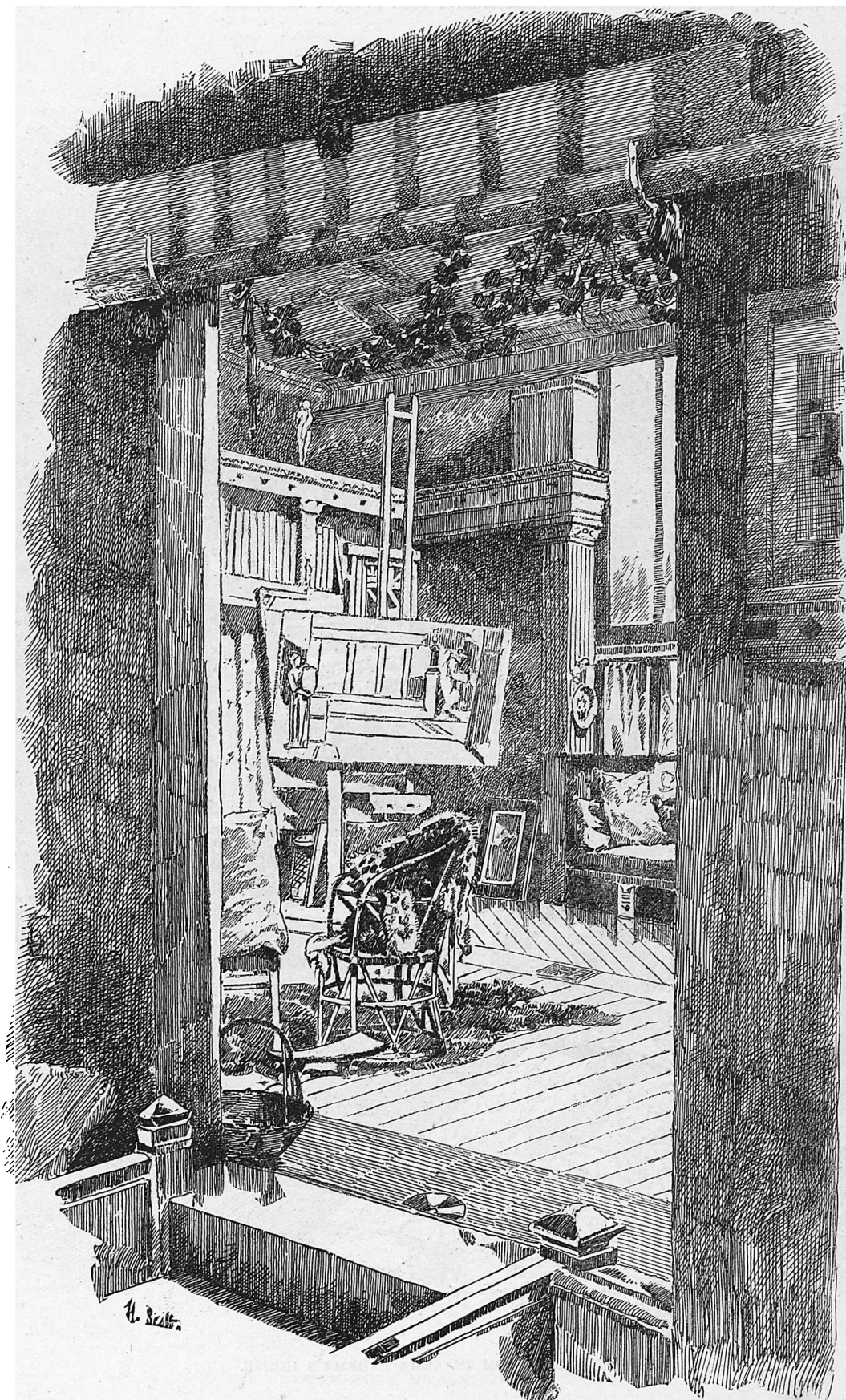
sonable measure. The window curtains have been tripled and the blinds have become flounced and fluffy à l'italienne, like ball-dresses. The ceilings and walls have been so crowded with hangings and mirrors and brackets laden with bronzes and porcelain that the rooms have come to resemble bazaars or museums. Then there have been Moorish bathrooms, Gothic arm-chairs, Pompadour toilettes, sedan chairs converted into cases for bibelots, beds surmounted by plumes of feathers, chimney-pieces draped

Louis XVI. style, with an admixture of the svelte and slender elegance of modern English furniture—the strictly necessary only, and that in a style of severe and distinguished elegance.
T. C.

FLORAL TABLE DECORATION.

THE piece of crimson velvet or plush down the centre of the table, which last year seemed to threaten to

become stereotyped and to displace all other methods of decoration at London fashionable dinners, has this year almost disappeared. Brocade is frequently used. The (London) Queen, from which we quote, says: "We have seen it at some small dinners, where it was desired that the outlay on flowers should be extremely moderate, and the effect was really excellent, the variegated colors of the brocade preventing the look of bareness which would have been inevitable with any plain material, and rendering a specimen glass before each guest ample for the floral decoration of the table. One specially pretty table of this description had the centre-piece of brown satin brocaded with yellow flowers, the edges were scalloped and finished with very narrow gold fringe. Before each guest was a specimen glass filled with buttercups and grass, and in the centre of the table was a fine old blue and white china bowl filled with the same flowers. All the china used was blue and white, and the glass engraved with the maidenhair pattern, with the exception of the hock glasses, which were of a pale shade of brownish yellow, and of the shape so familiar to us in old Flemish pictures. Another very pretty table, the decoration of which was far from costly, had a centre-piece of pale blue embossed velvet edged round with fern leaves, cornflowers, and white pinks, laid on as a wreath. Some pretty chased silver ornaments were placed upon it, and at each end was a silver cup filled with cornflowers, spiræa, and pink geranium. The silver candelabrum stood in the centre. The china was turquoise and gold, the glass quite plain except the champagne glasses, which were of a pretty shade of blue Venetian glass. The speci-



ALMA-TADEMA'S STUDIO.

men glasses were filled with the same flowers as the silver cups. Some people, who own valuable china or ivory figures, have this year begun to utilize them for dinner-table decoration. At one long table the centre-piece was of peacock-blue figured plush, edged with a thick but narrow chenille fringe. On this were placed single figures and groups of the most exquisite ivory carving, a large group forming the centre, and being surrounded by a circle of rose-red rhododendrons, so arranged that the trough which held them was invisible."